

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-8, 10, 15-21 and 23-28 remain in the application for further prosecution.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-8, 10, 15-21 and 23-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,887,154 (Luciano, Jr. et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,655,961 (Acres '961).

Personal Interview and Interview Summary

The Applicant notes with appreciation the interview conducted with Examiners Hu and Hotaling on February 1, 2008. Applicants reviewed and distinguished the features of claim 1 in view of the cited Acres '961 and Luciano references. Examiner Hotaling opined that there was an additional Acres reference not cited by the Office Action that related to mystery jackpots.

The Applicant agrees with the Interview Summary Sheet provided at the end of the interview summarizing the points raised with regard to Luciano and Acres '961. The Examiners indicated that they would consider the arguments outlined in this paper with regard to patentability.

The Office Action conceded that Luciano did not disclose randomly selected bonuses to be awarded and randomly selecting more than one but less than all of the players to be awarded the randomly selected bonuses. (p. 3). The Office Action asserts that Acres '961 teaches that after specific trigger events both the bonus and player may be chosen randomly.

Acres '961 generally relates to a system for configuring gaming terminals via various data field inputs. The Office Action has cited Col. 25, l. 25 to Col. 26, l. 46 as disclosing random bonus awards and randomly choosing more than one but less than all of the players to receive random bonus awards. This section relates to the configuration of the prizes for a specific

machine via a data file format. The cited section does not disclose assignment of random bonus prizes or the random selection of more than one and less than the eligible players to be awarded the bonus prizes as explained in the Interview. At best, Acres '961 discloses setting the bonus amount based on selecting options for an award data field. Acres '961 also does not disclose the random selection of players to be awarded the bonus amount nor is there any disclosure on how the field triggers a random bonus.

Applicant requests that the Examiner confirm that U.S. Patent No. 6,910,964 (Acres '964) is the mystery jackpot themed game reference discussed in the Interview and add Acres '964 as a reference considered in this case. Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are distinguishable over Acres '964. Acres '964 generally relates to a bonus prize that may include one of several promotions such as a cash bonus, a mystery prize, a progressive jackpot, etc. Col. 4, ll. 45-49 and Fig. 1. The awarding of the bonus prize is triggered by the coin-in collected pushing a prize pool over a certain threshold amount, such as a cash bonus amount. Col. 4, l. 66 - Col. 5, l. 2. The bonus prize is awarded to a selected eligible player, while the remainder of the players are awarded a fixed consolation prize. Col. 5, ll. 2-4.

Independent Claims 1 and 21 are allowable over the Acres '964 reference because they require "when an outcome occurs in the underlying wagering game that identifies that a jackpot is to be awarded to at least one of the players." Acres does not identify that a jackpot or any other bonus award is awarded based on an outcome occurring in the underlying wagering game. Acres discloses triggering a jackpot when the coin-in collected, prior to any outcome in the wagering game, allows the bonus pool 304 to exceed a cash bonus amount 307. Col. 4, l. 66 - Col. 5, l. 2.

Further these claims also require “randomly selecting bonuses to be awarded in the special bonus event.” One of the bonus awards in Acres is described as a mystery jackpot, however even in this promotion, the mystery prize is awarded to a single player and the consolation prize is a set amount awarded to the remainder of the players. Col. 7, ll. 31-32. The independent claims require randomly selecting bonuses, not simply one bonus as disclosed by Acres ‘964. Since Acres ‘964 does not disclose randomly selecting multiple bonuses, it does not anticipate the pending claims.

Finally, the independent claims require “randomly selecting more than one but less than all of said players to be awarded the randomly selected bonuses.” All of the players in the Acres system either are awarded the prize or a consolation prize. Thus, Acres does not disclose selecting more than one or less than all of the players to be awarded the bonus prize since only one player receives the promotional prize and all other players receive the consolation prize.

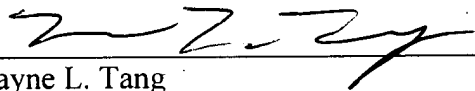
Conclusion

It is Applicant's belief that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance and actions towards that effect is respectfully requested.

If there are any matters which may be resolved or clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,

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